

## *From the Executive Director*

1-8-18

Dear CPAH Community:

**Welcome to our new website.** We are excited to be up and running and I am pleased with the opportunity to write a CPAH column – where we can share information and thoughts on how to address the need for affordable housing in our community.



Rachael Duke

I started my job here at CPAH two years ago, after working for over two decades on housing programs and issues in Multnomah County. During my third week at CPAH I attended an event in Tigard. I was so surprised to see someone whom I had housed in Portland present at the event with one of CPAH's families. The following week I saw someone who used to live in Portland, but was homeless, outside on the street in Washington County. And after that I met with school counselors in Tigard who talked about their families staying at a homeless shelter in Portland.

So – I knew I wanted this first column to be about the **regional nature of the housing crisis and homelessness**. That is, the lines on our maps that divide one county or city from another are actually not visible in real life. Just like people who have a place to live, our neighbors who have no housing move easily between cities and jurisdictions. And this means, from my perspective, that our solution needs to be regional as well.

A regional approach doesn't mean that any particular community is off the hook because some other locality is responsible. Rather, it means we all need to work together to be sure that there are opportunities in all parts of the region. **This will allow families and individuals facing the trauma of homelessness and the housing crisis to stay where they have the most support – their local community.** A regional approach means that housing can be near jobs, wherever those jobs are; requiring our lowest paid workers to travel the longest distances is not sustainable for the long term. And we need emergency solutions for those who are waiting for a permanent solution. Shelters and, in some cases, transitional housing. A stable and resilient community is one that has housing opportunities for all us.

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A regional approach means we are all here at the same time and any solution, to be successful, cannot be limited to a small patchwork of opportunity in our beautiful metropolitan area.

Solutions to deep social problems rarely have simple answers. **CPAH urges the whole community: elected leaders, governmental and non-governmental organizations, business leaders and citizen leaders, from all corners of the region, to work together to develop a collective strategy to create solutions, raise funds, and hold those of us doing the work accountable.**

This is a good time to weigh in, engage, and join us as we all consider and act to provide housing and opportunities. Pay attention to funding and planning proposals that are available or underway. Ask more from your community. **In particular, Metro, our regional government, is considering a bond measure for November 2018 to support affordable housing at a regional level.** At CPAH, we are excited about this possibility. It could mean so much to so many people.

Happy New Year –

*Rachael Duke*

Executive Director, Community Partners for Affordable Housing